

References to Brazil in the Portuguese Fascist Newspaper *Revolução*. This paper aims to analyze how the political events in Brazil after the 1930 revolution, which brought Vargas to power, were interpreted by the Portuguese fascist newspaper "Revolution". The rise of Salazar in Portugal and Vargas in Brazil raised expectations around the fascistization of politics in both countries due to the insurgence of extremist right-wing parties and/or political factions in their quests for power. From a distance, the Portuguese National-Syndicalism movement and its periodical, *Revolução* [Revolution], which had no correspondents in Brazil, sought to understand what was happening and somehow influence the course of events. By analyzing the many references to Brazil over the nearly two years when this Portuguese periodical was published, we are able to perceive the difficulties the Portuguese fascists had in understanding the Brazilian political conjuncture. As their disappointment grew, especially regarding Vargas' approximation with the liberals, they joined dissident Varguist groups, who likewise had no ties to fascism.

KEYWORDS: Fascism; National-Syndicalism; Varguism; Press.

O Brasil no jornal fascista português *Revolução*. Este artigo analisa o modo como os acontecimentos políticos ocorridos no Brasil após a revolução de 1930, que alçou Vargas ao poder, foram interpretados pelo jornal fascista português *Revolução*. A ascensão de Salazar em Portugal e a de Vargas no Brasil criaram expectativas em torno de uma fascização da política nos dois países, mediante a criação de partidos e/ou de facções extremistas de direita, na sua busca pelo poder. À distância, uma vez que o jornal não tinha correspondentes no Brasil, o nacional-sindicalismo em Portugal tentava compreender o que se passava e de alguma forma interferir no rumo dos acontecimentos. Através das muitas referências sobre o Brasil encontradas em quase dois anos de existência do jornal, foi possível perceber que a conjuntura política brasileira era difícil de perceber para os fascistas portugueses. Com o passar do tempo, perceberam as aproximações entre Vargas e os liberais e acabaram por se unir a grupos dissidentes do varguismo, e que igualmente não possuíam vínculos com o fascismo.

PALAVRAS-CHAVE: fascismo; nacional-sindicalismo; varguismo; imprensa.

References to Brazil in the Portuguese Fascist Newspaper *Revolução*

The intellectual networks established and consolidated in specific contexts have been the subject of an increasing number of studies, particularly since the 1990s, when “transnational history” emphasized the need to refrain from analyses specifically focused on individual nations. In terms of intellectual history or the circulation of ideas, although this “innovation” was promising, it did not substantially alter the landscape of the existing analyses; ever since the earliest studies by Quentin Skinner (1969) in the mid-1960s, there have been analytical approaches encompassing the vast transnational circulation of political ideas, to the detriment of an older history of ideas, in which national diachrony served as the main paradigm for comparative analysis. In his studies on Machiavelli, during a period when the nation-state was merely a project in Italy, Skinner reflected on the Florentine philosopher’s intellectual connections with other thinkers from the Italian peninsula and beyond, recapturing a synchronically constructed “transnational” political dialog (Skinner, 1996, chapter 6).

By examining the development of intellectual networks and the circulation of political ideas in specific contexts, this article analyzes a small fraction of the circulation of fascism during the 1920s and early 1930s, based on two specific, synchronically connected contexts: Brazil and Portugal. Given the breadth of the topic, we circumscribe our approach to reports on Brazil in the Portuguese press, i. e., how Portuguese National Syndicalism interpreted and evaluated the changes that took place in Brazil following the rise of Vargas. This will be accomplished by analyzing the periodical *Revolução* [Revolution].

We would hereby note that the objectives do not include any analysis of the discourses presented in the press and are instead restricted to observing how the Brazilian events were perceived by Portuguese political leaders affiliated with fascism in the early 1930s.

THE CHANGES IN BRAZIL

Much of the national historiography analyzes the 1930 Revolution as a decisive event that marked the ending of the Oligarchic Republic, founded in 1889. Nevertheless, despite its seemingly disruptive character, oligarchs were present not only in the leadership of the revolutionary movement but also in the organization and consolidation of the new regime under Getúlio Vargas in the wake of the revolution.¹ Between the establishment of the Provisional Government and the Estado Novo coup in 1937, oligarchic leaders acted alongside or in opposition to the military and other key political actors in the struggle to lead the new regime. These disputes reflect in a series of events that resulted in quite a volatile situation and, as we demonstrate herein, which was not always well understood in the analyses produced by the Portuguese leaders on the other side of the Atlantic.

This section addresses several events in the period that were either discussed or merely referenced in *Revolução*. One such event is the Paulista War, which took place in 1932.² Given the constraints on length, this article does not seek to historiographically examine what took place in São Paulo, about which there are conflicting positions in academic and public discussions. The key point here is that this represented an attempt by the defeated politicians to make recourse to violent means to restore the constitutional order postponed due to the Provisional Government. Unable to mobilize sufficient support from other federal units and the national armed forces, the movement was defeated by the then ruling powers.

As an immediate response to the Paulista uprising and the internal pressures he was under, Vargas convened a Constituent Assembly days before the outbreak of the 1932 Revolt. There are important considerations regarding how the composition and the results of the political clashes in the Assembly reflected in the constitutional text approved in 1934.³ For the present article, the most significant change enacted by the constitutional text concerns political representation: the *de facto* establishment of compulsory voting, women's suffrage, and corporatist representation. Although these three innovations were already present in the Election Code approved two years prior, they were now systematized, refined, and incorporated into the Constitutional Charter.

1 On the main arguments concerning the 1930 Revolution, see: Decca (1984), Fausto (1994), Fernandes (1981), Forjaz (1988), Guimarães (1983), and Viscardi (2001).

2 On this event, see: Albuquerque (1982), Andrade Netto (1995), Apolinário (2018), Maluf (1986), Silva (1967), and Villa (2008).

3 On the 1934 Constitution, see Cepeda (2009); Gomes (1980) and Viscardi (2016, pp 199-222).

However, as we shall demonstrate, *Revolução* prioritized the debate in the early years of the Provisional Government and the Paulista War. By the time the Constituent Assembly convened, the newspaper no longer existed.

NATIONAL SYNDICALISM AND *REVOLUÇÃO*

While Brazil was searching for new institutional solutions to old problems, culminating in the Revolution of 1930, the Portuguese were undertaking similar endeavors to attain stability in the First Republic, shaken by successive changes in leadership and coups d'état. National Syndicalism was established in 1932 amid this backdrop of emerging nationalist platforms and leaders, rising violence, and institutional crises. The fascist-tinged movement was partially composed of former Lusitanian Integralists – including the youngest, Rolão Preto, who later would become its main leader – and other nationalist and authoritarian groups. As Brazilian Integralists would do years later, they attempted a coup against Salazar and were declared illegal (Pinto, 2015, chapter 1).

The movement published the first issue of the newspaper *Revolução: Diário Nacional-Sindicalista da Tarde* [Revolution: National Syndicalist Afternoon Gazette] on February 15, 1932 to express its political struggle and disseminate its guiding principles. After 417 subsequent issues, the periodical was discontinued on September 23 of the following year.

Three months after its first edition, the newspaper began to be run by Rolão Preto. By that point in time, 66 issues of the periodical had been published. When the newspaper was shut down on the order of Salazar's, its leadership, name, and ideology had already radically altered and severing its ties with the fascist movement.⁴

The political thought of the National Socialism leader encapsulates the political prerogatives of the movement. The personalistic and centralizing leadership of Rolão Preto set the tone for the entire movement, not uncommon in movements of this type. Like other fascist leaders of that period, Preto sought to offer a political alternative to socialism and anarchism, ideologies popular among Portuguese workers. He was simultaneously moving away from the liberal model, which the more radical Portuguese unions opposed. His anti-capitalist rhetoric favored an organic syndicalism that fought to cut the poverty prevailing among workers and thereby attempted to bring important sectors of

4 The name was changed to *Revolução Nacional* [National Revolution], Manuel Múrias became its director, and it began to advocate an alliance between “national syndicalists” and Salazarism.

Portuguese workers closer to the movement. To protect the interests of labor, he proposed setting up union councils, which would regulate wages, adjudicate conflicts, and represent workers in the public administration. Regarding the economy, he advocated for economic interventionism, strongly criticizing the liberalist principles of economic freedom (Baiôa, Fernandes, and Meneses, 2003).

Criticizing liberal representation, he defended corporatism and argued the country should be led politically by a “Caesar”, i. e., a charismatic and centralizing leader, who would not be Salazar but rather more likely Rolão Preto. Although the movement had internal bodies for taking shared decisions, Preto sought to control its direction but was unable to prevent internal tensions from threatening its existence.

THE NATIONAL SYNDICALIST NEWSPAPER VIEWS ON BRAZIL IN THE 1930S

During our research, we had access to two years of the newspaper's editions: the issues released in Lisbon in 1932 and those released in Porto in 1933. Thus, we had access to 356 issues from March to December 1932 and January to May 1933. We found a total of 93 articles about Brazilian political circumstances, demonstrating the movement's particular concern with the political events ongoing in Brazil at the time.⁵ References to other countries were rare, which indicates interest and a certain hope on behalf of the Portuguese fascists that the Brazilian Revolution of 1930 would shift the country closer to the fascist model advocated by the national syndicalist leaders.

The articles about Brazil were primarily political, although the coffee economy, still responsible for much of the national wealth, also drew Portuguese interest. The Revolution of 1930, the Paulista War, and the Constituent Assembly were covered and analyzed throughout this period (the latter only in passing). The people dispossessed due to the 1932 event – mostly exiled in Portugal – were also featured in the newspaper pages with some even interviewed. As was common in Portuguese newspapers of the period, the sizeable Portuguese colony in Brazil was an object of interest as was the diplomatic representation of Portugal in Brazil. Finally, *Revolução* paid particular attention to relations between Brazil and the United States, which, given the hopes of the national syndicalist movement around attracting the former colony to its project, did not look kindly on the recent strengthening of ties between the two American giants.

5 For the purposes of the present article, we will here only analyze reports published in 1932.

THE REVOLUTION OF 1930

In its coverage of the Revolution of 1930, the periodical applied its own interpretation of the event, which was not always consistent with those of its own actors. According to the newspaper, the Revolution of 1930 brought Brazil closer to the European authoritarian regimes that were then being consolidated; to a certain extent, this was logical, as Brazilians themselves considered the Provisional Government a dictatorship. The difference arises in how, according to some of the actors involved in the Brazilian revolutionary project, the new regime's authoritarianism would inevitably end with the return of political institutionality after re-constitutionalizing the country. That belief, however, was not shared by one of the main revolutionary groups supporting Vargas, the *Clube 3 de Outubro* [October 3rd Club]⁶, which brought military and civilians together around a more prolonged dictatorial project.

The Portuguese periodical devoted several pages to recounting the achievements of Brazilians, who were therein referred to as “*patriotas-irmãos*” [brothers in patriotism] in their struggle against oligarchy, caciquism, and liberalism. The *Clube 3 de Outubro* received clear praise as the primary driver of the revolutionary project in defiance of the other sectors that opposed them and rallied around different national projects. The Portuguese newspaper always clearly stated that the revolution was an ongoing process, not yet accomplished, but that sought to construct a nationalist and authoritarian state.

We gradually understood that *Revolução* had already chosen to support a side among the groups fighting for control over the Brazilian Provisional Government following the Revolution of 1930, namely *Clube 3 de Outubro*, the organization closest to what they deemed a perfect dictatorial regime. Inspired by the association, the Portuguese fascists criticized all those proposing to re-constitutionalize the country. “*In Brazil, as in the revolution in Portugal, the time of oligarchs, of coronelism, of caciquism has passed... A new time has come, the time of the new ones – our time?*”

However, Vargas' leadership throughout the process did not endear him to the Portuguese fascists any more than Salazar had. After the Revolution,

6 A political organization established in 1931 composed of military and civilian members, which sought to give political support to Vargas and his government following the Revolution of 1930. The group stood against the country's re-constitutionalization and in favor of strengthening authoritarianism and nationalism in opposition to the oligarchic liberalism characteristic of the First Brazilian Republic. The Club was short-lived, underwent several transformations, and ceased its activities in 1935. For further information, see: Leal (2014), Carone (1975), Carvalho, (1975), and Forjaz (1988).

7 “No Brasil”, April 20, 1932, p. 3.

the expectation was that the Provisional Government would not act as conciliatory towards the old regional *caciques* and would establish a dictatorship led by a Caesar resolute in his projects for transforming Brazil. Confronted by news of a likely re-constitutionalization of the country, particularly after the publication of the Election Code of 1932, the newspaper then criticized how the leader “grew soft” and attempted to establish a conciliatory government instead of standing up to the liberal groups. In keeping with members of *Clube 3 de Outubro*, the Portuguese fascists saw the re-constitutionalization of Brazil as a very serious political error.

Henceforth, new perspectives on the revolutionary process bubbled to the surface. Increases in public spending, closer ties with the United States, and the coffee support policy were criticized as actions revealing the limitations of the Revolution of 1930. Based on Vargas’ actions, the Portuguese radicals began to interpret the Revolution of 1930 no longer as a struggle for anti-liberal values but rather as a new chapter in the struggle for power that had been waged in the “Old Republic” past: “*Brazil was called a brother nation due to blood ties. Now we are also brothers in this fight...*”⁸

In April 1932, one of the newspaper’s writers expressed his fears about the likelihood of Brazil re-constitutionalizing.⁹ In defending autocratic regimes, he argued the ballot box was becoming increasingly discredited and actually should belong in a museum. Modern revolutionaries condemned the exchange of votes for political favors and identified the culprits: political *caciques* and Freemasonry. In his references to Brazil, he argued that the Vargas dictatorship was more stable than other Latin American experiences; however, events such as the storming of *Diário Carioca* (Macedo, 2022) by *Clube 3 de Outubro* were necessary to remove professional politicians from power, especially those from Rio Grande do Sul but also their supporters from Minas Gerais, Bahia, and São Paulo. Demonstrating more detailed knowledge about the Club, they defended its anti-constitutionalist action: “*The constituent assemblies, once convened, would destroy all that was good and useful that the revolution had produced.*” For the writer, the Revolution of 1930 still remained unfinished. It would thus be premature to convene a Constituent Assembly, and the Club’s *tenentes* (young army officers) were right to reject it. They believed the direction of the revolution had been set by the Club’s control over the revolutionary process.

8 Issue of July 15, 1932.

9 “Nota política: no Brasil como em Portugal” [Author: D.F], April 2, 1932, p. 4.

THE PAULISTA WAR

On July 11, 1932¹⁰, for the first time, *Revolução* covered an event that would cement its views on the Vargas leadership and the direction taken by the Brazilian dictatorship: the Paulista War. With indirect access to information and reprinting news published earlier in Buenos Aires, it reported on the beginning of the Paulista uprising to overthrow Vargas. The newspaper had hitherto expressed concern although it noted that the movement was limited to the city of São Paulo. The periodical clearly did not have access to all the information but it was already widely known that Vargas had convened the Commission of 21, responsible for drafting a preliminary constitutional project. This, from the *Revolução* perspective, suggested a victory for the Paulistas in the conflict. The articles contained several contradictions: while the newspaper praised Vargas' control over the situation, it feared other states would join the Paulista uprising. There was also a rumor circulating that Góes Monteiro had joined the Paulistas, which was untrue.¹¹

Reprinting articles from Uruguay, the United States, and Argentina, the newspaper reaffirmed the victory of the legalist troops, particularly praising the efforts of Juarez Távora, who had mobilized soldiers from the Northeastern states to control the uprising despite facing still considerable Paulista resistance. The newspaper feared the movement would receive support from Rio Grande do Sul, which could, in fact, threaten the advances of the Brazilian dictatorship.¹² In addition to reporting on the confrontation, it was very critical of the Provisional Government's conciliatory attempts as they were a sign of weakness from a dictatorial perspective.

Dissatisfied with *Clube 3 de Outubro* for having failed to stop the liberals from participating in the new regime established in 1930, the Portuguese periodical turned to another political group better aligned with its values: the Brazilian Integralists who, they maintained were the true enemies of liberalism. Indeed, the newspaper was slow to develop a more realistic reading of the Brazilian situation, which in turn helped underpin its interpretation of the Paulista War, which had begun more than a month prior: "*In Brazil, everything is liberal, even those using a dictatorship to govern. And it is because everyone is so liberal that freedom is increasingly dominant there... the freedom of*

10 "Estrangeiro no Brasil", July 11, 1932, p. 8.

11 "No Brasil os revoltosos de São Paulo derrubaram o governo do Estado", July 12, 1932, p. 8; "Os revoltosos de São Paulo estão dispostos a resistir", July 13, 1932, p. 8.

12 "Reina a tranquilidade no Rio de Janeiro", July 14, 1932, p. 5; "O movimento revolucionário de São Paulo", July 14, 1932, p. 5.

civil war.”¹³ For the Portuguese fascists, Vargas’ failure to use force against the Paulistas was a testament to his weak commitment to the authoritarian and anti-liberal project they advocated.

Attempting to interpret the reasons for the conflict, *Revolução*, when inquiring whether events happening in Brazil reflected was a struggle taking place in the field of ideas, i.e., between constitutionalists and dictators, explained to the reader that this was less of an ideological dispute and more of an attempt by Vargas to remain in power, threatened by liberal groups with short-sighted political aims. Furthermore, the periodical emphasized how the only anti-liberal group in Brazil was the Integralists and they were not in power. Thus, Vargas’ repression of the Paulista uprising was not framed as a struggle between anti-liberalism and liberalism but merely as a power struggle between two groups with little or no ideology.

Based on information sourced from international news agencies, *Revolução* kept reporting on developments in the Paulista War but published contradictory information¹⁴ until a Portuguese emigrant, living in Brazil, sent a letter to the newspaper¹⁵ clarifying the movement. He stated that, contrary to that reported in the Portuguese press, the Paulista uprising was not a “*revirvalho*” – an opposition movement that had taken place in February 1927 in Portugal in reaction to the dictatorship established the previous year by Gomes da Costa, supported by the lower ranks of the military – because the Brazilian dictatorship in no way resembled the Portuguese case. The Paulistas did not wish to return to the liberal regime of the past. That analysis could only be read as a very personal interpretation by the writer but it did partially coincide with assessments the newspaper had published previously. The Portuguese emigrant pointed out how, although the Revolution of 1930 had strong popular support, Vargas could not transform this into a strong government and, hence, why he felt threatened by the Paulistas. He opted for conciliation, thus consolidating a political setback, which entailed maintaining a constitutional republic. The letter writer said, in his very particular interpretation of the Revolution of 1930:

13 Issue of August 9, 1932.

14 “Rebentou a revolução no Rio Grande do Sul”, August 18, 1932, p. 8; “Há oito dias”, August 23, 1932, p. 1; “No Brasil metralhado”, August 23, 1932, p. 8; “A situação brasileira é já de guerra civil”, August 25, 1932, p. 8; “No Brasil a guerra civil”, August 26, 1932, p. 8; “O Brasil em armas – O bombardeio de Guaratinguetá”, August 31, 1932, p. 8; “No Brasil uma nota do Ministério da Guerra”, September 1, 1932, p. 8; “No Brasil. Será?”, September 6, 1932, p. 8.

15 “A revolução brasileira” [Author: Lusitano], September 16, 1932, p. 5.

The country that longed for a powerful regime, capable of maintaining national unity and reshaping the nation's political customs, soon saw its power seized by a group of ambitious *tenentes*, and the dictator himself was overpowered by the *Clube 3 de Outubro*, an extremist association formed by those *tenentes*.

The result was the shattering of discipline, which triggered the uprising of the Paulistas who, far from being oppositionists like those in the *revirvalho*, were supported by the majority of the Brazilian people, fearlessly dedicating themselves to the cause without any other interest apart from bringing about changes that they deemed fair and just. They were revolutionaries fighting against a "dictatorship of politicians", led by the "radical left". However, he argued the world was moving towards the right and Brazilians, who are very conservative, opposed the leftist tyranny established after the revolution. According to the writer, the Paulista War of 1932 aimed to restore the values of 1930, which the left had betrayed. In his view, following the Paulista victory, Brazil would not resurrect the model the revolution had fought against but rather fulfill its conservative destiny.

This anachronistic interpretation, full of contradictions, made by an admirer of the Portuguese newspaper in Brazil, must have greatly confused the thinking of the Portuguese fascists. To address *Clube 3 de Outubro* as leftist and simultaneously argue for the hypothesis that the Paulistas were fighting to restore the values of a revolution they fought against is a clear demonstration of how lost the Portuguese were concerning the direction of events in Brazil.

The Paulista surrender, reported on almost two weeks after the publication of this article, similar to the other reports that followed¹⁶, caused the coffee market to collapse and also jeopardises the entire credibility of the newspaper. Even without understanding many of the intra-oligarchic conflicts in Brazil in the 1930s, they allied themselves with the exiles of 1932 in Portugal.¹⁷ The newspaper covered the arrival of the 77 deportees and praised Pedro Toledo¹⁸,

16 "O triunfo da ditadura brasileira", September 29, 1932, p. 8; "A revolução de São Paulo and a alta dos produtos Brasileiros", September 30, 1932, p. 8; "No Brasil o rescaldo da Revolução paulista", October 6, 1932, p. 8; October 7, 1932, p. 5.

17 "Revolução de São Paulo – Chegaram ontem 77 deportados políticos brasileiros", November 19, 1932, p. 8; "Grandeza de Alma", November 21, 1932, p. 5.

18 Pedro Toledo (1860-1935) had a long and distinguished political career. He was born into a family with a long tradition in Brazilian politics and held several executive and legislative positions, including as Minister under Hermes da Fonseca. He had strong ties with republicanism and Freemasonry. He held diplomatic positions in Italy, Spain, and Argentina. As a supporter of the secret ballot, he helped *tenentes* in the 1924 revolt and was subsequently harshly criticized by then-president Arthur Bernardes. Upon his appointment as Interventor of São Paulo by →

Bertoldo Klinger¹⁹, and Arthur Bernardes²⁰, without considering the past of those political leaders in the previous decade when involved both with the Revolution of 1930 and with liberal and oligarchic interests. By welcoming the exiles of 1932 with honors, they demonstrated not only a lack of knowledge about the events but also the biographies of those supporting the Paulista War precisely to preserve the oligarchic liberalism in which they had been shaped, as was the case of Bernardes and Pedro Toledo, among others. The newspaper treated them as having been wronged, without any real understanding of their historical ties to Brazilian oligarchic liberalism and their divergences from the ideas and positions of the Portuguese fascist movement. However, they did see them as defeated and deemed them worthy for having fought for an ideal, despite not knowing whether they were right or wrong. However, they were welcomed because they spoke the same language and were considered their “brothers from the tropics.”

→ Vargas, he was also criticized by the *tenentes* due to his commitment to immediately re-constitutionalizing the country and his proximity to the *Frente Única Paulista*, FUP [Paulista United Front]. He was deposed following the victory of the legalist forces in the Paulista War (Mayer, 2014).

19 Bertoldo Klinger (1884-1969) was a military man from Rio Grande do Sul who studied at the Realengo Military Academy in Rio de Janeiro. He participated in the German military mission during the Hermes da Fonseca administration, as part of the group known as the “Young Turks”, and was editor of the *Revista de Defesa Nacional* [Journal of National Defense]. He was a military *attaché* in Peru and, upon his return, was accused of involvement in the 1924 revolt in São Paulo. In Mato Grosso, he was accused of being a traitor by Miguel Costa when fighting the Column. He supported the Military Junta that deposed Washington Luiz and resisted handing over power to Vargas. Then, he began to oppose *Clube 3 de Outubro*. In 1932, he joined the São Paulo revolutionaries and, when defeated, wrote their request for armistice. Exiled in Lisbon, he returned to Brazil in 1934 on being granted amnesty (Mayer, 2014).

20 Arthur Bernardes (1875-1955) was a politician from Minas Gerais who held several positions, among them Governor of Minas Gerais (1918-1922) and President of the Republic (1922-1926). An authoritarian and a nationalist, he governed with an iron fist, demobilizing the opposition and fighting the tenentist revolts. Without participating directly in the Revolution of 1930, he supported Vargas when the latter took power and was personally appointed Brazilian Ambassador to Paris. Internal conflicts in Minas Gerais divided the elite between two groups contending for power: the *Partido Republicano Mineiro* – PRM [Minas Gerais Republican Party] and the *Legião de Outubro* [October Legion]; Bernardes supported the former. The conflict was resolved through an agreement that led to the founding of a new party: the *Partido Social Nacionalista* – PSN [Social Nationalist Party], which was short-lived. Bernardes was an ally in the 1932 São Paulo election and, on their defeat, he also went into exile in Lisbon. Upon his departure, his son was shot and killed. He returned to Brazil after the amnesty and resumed his activities in the PRM. He was one of the signatories of the Miners’ Manifesto, which demanded the re-democratization of the country during the Estado Novo (Malin, 2014).

THE CIRCULATION OF IDEAS

Revolução gave space to several writers whose opinions it endorsed. One of the articles published²¹ presented three models of dictatorship: in the first, the leader was described as holding a community mandate exercised on behalf of a nation; the second model was based on the use and abuse of force, generally in the service of a caste; finally, in the third model, parliamentarians holding a majority were capable of irresponsibly imposing their will, i. e., in the service of a party, which was in itself paradoxical as parties were opposed to dictatorships.

According to the authors, the first model was straightforward, honest, and favored the common good. Its greatest example was the Italian fascist dictatorship, responsible for saving the country from both communism and a weak monarchy as well as expanding the Italian empire. Its imperfect version was the Portuguese dictatorship, which sought conciliation with its opponents and feared using violence, the only way to guarantee its continued existence. The writers also took a favorable view of the rise of Nazism in Germany as Hitler would introduce a nationalism capable of saving Germany from communism.

Although responsible when headed by a personalistic leader, the second model remained illegitimate as an imposition lacking any authority.

The third model was deemed irresponsible and cowardly. Cases included the Russian dictatorship, where the communists imposed their absolute power in opposition to the interests of millions of Soviets. Other examples were France, where Freemasonry prevented the advance of a true dictatorship, and Spain, where a dictatorship of parliamentary majority parties was established against the monarchy.

Where would Brazil fit into the writers' analysis? Under the first model but also ranked as just as imperfect as the dictatorship in Portugal. According to these authors, the Vargas dictatorship had moved away from Liberalism and Freemasonry thanks to the actions of the *Centro Dom Vital* (CDV) [Dom Vital Center], and *Pátria Nova*. However, the Vargas dictatorship had not been able to escape all the liberal traps.

The CDV (Kornis, 2014) was a Catholic organization founded in 1922 by Jackson de Figueiredo²² with the support of Cardinal Leme to rally Brazilian

21 "Ditaduras" [Authors: Cláudio and António Correia de Oliveira Guimarães], March 9, 1932, p. 3.

22 Jackson de Figueiredo (1891-1928). After converting to Catholicism in 1928, he became one of the leading figures behind the founding of the CDV and the magazine *A Ordem*. He published several books characterized by his opposition to liberalism and communism. He died at the age of 37 but left an important legacy for Brazilian conservative and Catholic →

Catholic intellectuals. The movement organized conferences and debates and published the magazine *A Ordem* [The Order] and soon became more conservative, defending the authoritarian practices of President Arthur Bernardes and creating space for the political militancy of its leading members. Following the Revolution of 1930, now led by Alceu Amoroso Lima, the CDV supported the Vargas dictatorship, which produced two important benefits: the introduction of religious teaching in schools and permission to create Catholic unions.

Many of its members embraced the integralist project and Patrianovism. (Trindade, 2014). It was also the crucible for the emergence of groups that would later form the *Liga Eleitoral Católica* (LEC) [Catholic Electoral League], an organization set up to elect the greatest possible number of Catholic constituent deputies. The CDV quickly spread throughout the country, gathering a number of supporters. The death of Cardinal Leme and Amoroso Lima's break with integralist ideas was to change the direction of the movement in the 1940s.

In turn, Patrianovism was an organization founded in 1928 based on corporatist and Catholic doctrines to advocate for the restoration of the monarchy in Brazil. The movement even flirted with Brazilian Integralism, but the favorable view of republicanism held by the "green shirts" pushed them away.

In the same issue, the newspaper lamented the lack of a Caesar in Brazil, i. e., of someone capable of putting a lid on the hatred and violence that dominating and destabilizing the country's politics. An article on the country's economic challenges²³ criticized the intense rural exodus that forced countless families to break their community bonds, particularly those of a religious nature and who faced many challenges in the cities at that time. The apparent contempt of Brazilian politicians for rural life was also explicit in the deliberate policy of burning coffee. Perhaps the newspaper was unaware that those initiatives were motivated not by contempt for coffee production, which still accounted for most of the revenue earned by Brazil internationally but rather by efforts to ensure the product's prices remained stable by holding back supply as Brazil still held a monopoly on global production. Following the setting up of the *Conselho Nacional do Café* (CNC) [National Coffee Council] by Vargas, these actions became centralized under his government. To contain the fall in prices caused by the 1929 stock market crash, tons of coffee underwent incineration.

The newspaper also advocated for two other ideals: corporatism and nationalism. Thus, they looked favorably on Vargas' economic interventions

→ thought. Instituto Jackson de Figueiredo. Available at: <https://www.institutojacksondefigueiredo.org/nosso-patrono>. Accessed: September 27, 2022.

23 "Notas junto à terra by Antônio L. Tinoco", March 19, 1932, p. 4.

and his proposal for class representation in the composition of the new parliament. Articles claimed Brazil was advancing, alongside France, Italy, and Germany, in its struggle against liberalism and communism²⁴.

These authors proposed that the constant state intervention both in the economy and in the political governance were proof Brazil was becoming a nationalist country. However, they perceived nationalism as an antithesis of democracy because individual freedom posed an obstacle to the necessarily interventionist role of the state. The nationalist regimes cited were also authoritarian, unlike Russia, Mexico, Spain, and Chile. Clearly, the *Revolução* writers were not only ill-informed about Brazil but also tended to contradict one another in their analyses of various topics.²⁵

Following the Paulista War and the announcement of Brazil's re-constitutionalization, the Portuguese fascists were even more dissatisfied with Vargas and incredulous about his ability to transform Brazil into a dictatorship similar to those in Europe, clearly referring to Italian fascism and Nazism. They considered the Vargas regime merely personalistic and argued that it was dominated by factions he was powerless against:

He is not a dictator driven by any sincere desire to save, from the power of the partisan hordes, the noble Brazilian nation, which has such glorious traditions and is so close to our hearts due to strong racial affinities. He lacks an ideal, a new doctrine, which, as in European dictatorships, replaced the old liberalist state with the new, nationalist state. He has ousted the parties and created a dictatorship of politicians.²⁶

Nevertheless, they were still hopeful about Brazil and other Latin American countries given a "new wind of social and religious revitalization", which was Patrianovism. This movement differed from Integralism because it was monarchist, Catholic, and nationalist, valuing the municipality, union organization, and corporatist representation, three axes that held much in common with National Syndicalism. They accredited the growth of this "revitalizing wind" to the presence of the Catholic intellectual Jackson de Figueiredo, founder of the aforementioned CDV, who, even after death, left his books and the Catholic movement as a legacy. From the newspaper's perspective, he would have been the Brazilian version of António Sardinha, the leader of Lusitanian Integralism.

24 "A onda nacionalista" [Author: António L. Tinoco], April 27, 1932, p. 4.

25 "Para lá ou para cá [Author: António Lepierre Tinoco], June, 23, 1932, p. 5; "Nacionalistas, sim! [Author: Luiz de Forjaz Trigueiros], June 30, 1932, p. 5; "Tempo Novo [Author: António Maria], July 30, 1932, p. 5.

26 "Do nacionalismo brasileiro" [Author: Silvino Leitão], October 1, 1932, p. 5.

Therefore, as the newspaper became more aware of the Brazilian situation, it distanced itself from Vargas and briefly moved closer to Integralism²⁷. However, the commitment of the “green shirts” to the republic did not encourage the movements to seek common ground. The movements left were Catholic conservatism and the Patrianovists, with the latter having no significant social presence in the country despite being close to the ideals of Portuguese National Syndicalism.

EMPATHIC RELATIONS WITH BRAZIL

The periodical sought to highlight the good relations prevailing between Brazil and Portugal therein depicted as sister nations, which did not always occur in the Portuguese press in general. The celebrations of Portugal Day, the welcoming of the new Portuguese ambassador, the emphasis on events to welcome Portuguese residents of Brazil visiting Portugal, and the establishment of new Portuguese communities in Brazil, among other festivities, received coverage alongside the political analysis.²⁸

The fascist press praised both the Brazilian public administration and the people in general. The growing number of publishing houses in the country and their impact on the development of popular culture were also highlighted, praising authors with greater connections to conservative and/or authoritarian thoughts, such as Gustavo Barroso, Viriato Correa, or Menotti del Picchia. Vargas’ government was praised for handling public finances with efficiency and diligence, honoring its foreign commitments, and even acquiring warships.²⁹

The movement’s leader, Rolão Preto, devoted an article in the newspaper to welcoming Portuguese residents of Brazil who were visiting Portugal. He did not call them “*exilados*” [exile] but “*desterrados*” [dispossessed]:

(...) Brazil is certainly not an exile for us in the cruel sense of the word. The Lands of the Holy Cross are a vast province of the moral empire of the Portuguese. However, our people’s rural and sentimental soul is eternally connected to the land where their eyes opened to the sunlight and the beloved Lusitanian landscape.³⁰

27 About the Brazilian integralist movement, see: Gonçalves (2014) and Grecco (2021).

28 “Dr. Martinho Nobre de Melo”, June 2nd, 1932, p. 8; “O Dia de Camões no Brasil”, June 12th, 1932, p. 8; “Excursão dos portugueses do Brasil”, June 13th, 1932, p. 2; “A colônia trasmontana de São Paulo”, June 15th, 1932, p. 8.; “Portugueses que visitam Portugal”, June 17th, 1932, p. 4.

29 “Os progressos do Livro no Brasil”, June 10, 1932, p. 8; “Economias oficiais: um grande exemplo”, June 16th, 1932, p. 4; “O Banco do Brasil paga as suas dívidas”, June 16th, 1932, p. 8.

30 “Bem-vindos portugueses do Brasil!”, June 18th, 1932, p. 1; “Chegou a Lisboa a rainha da Colônia portuguesa no Brasil” [Author: R.M], June 18th, 1932, p. 4.

Furthermore, the Portuguese leader explained the reasons for such unusual kinship: Brazil was not just any country but rather part of the Portuguese Atlantic Empire. The movement's plans extended to restoring the colonial past of the Old Portuguese Empire, thus annexing not only Brazil but also other former colonies. Nationalism was to become the driving force behind the restoration of the lost grandeur of the Lusitanians after having now freed themselves of the yoke of liberal political *caciques*.

The visit of a Portuguese beauty queen to Lisbon, Miss Leopoldina Belo, chosen by the Portuguese community living in Brazil in 1930, also drew praise from the newspaper. She was welcomed as a "queen". The young Portuguese woman disembarked from the ship surrounded by tugboats and received a dignified welcome, attended by journalists and the general population, who were eager for autographs. The newspaper highlighted her features: as the most beautiful, honest, hardworking, and intelligent; for having sweet eyes, free of mascara, and a simple soul, without any psychological complications. These remarks correspondingly reveal what the newspaper classed as its ideal of a good woman, and while enabling the Portuguese who remained in Europe to be proud of the country they lived in.³¹

FINAL THOUGHTS

With the expansion of fascism throughout Europe, the events of the 1930s in Brazil naturally drew the attention of the Portuguese press. There were high expectations on behalf of Portuguese National Syndicalism that Vargas, who established a dictatorship following the Revolution of 1930, would align himself with fascism. The establishment of corporatist representation, the appointment of intervenors to rule the states, the strengthening of *Clube 3 de Outubro*, and the establishing of revolutionary militias—some with fascist aesthetics and ideas—filled their Portuguese counterparts with hope.

Despite governing in an authoritarian and nationalist way, Vargas was not averse to attempting to construct a conciliation project with the liberal and oligarchic sectors that had backed the Revolution that brought him to power. He was a child of this model of governance. The publication of a new Election Code, setting up an Election Justice system, and advancing with women's suffrage and compulsory enlistment were clear signs that the anti-liberalism of the new regime had clear limits, which the fascists on the other side of the Atlantic did not especially understand.

31 "Excursão a Paris – Em honra da colônia portuguesa no Brasil", June 23rd, 1932 - p. 1; "A rainha da colônia portuguesa do Brasil" [Author: Fernanda de Castro], June 23rd, 1932, p. 4.

As seen above, the newspaper was not well informed on events in Brazil. Due to depending on information from American, British, or Argentine agencies, its positions were rather ambiguous. Some reports came from Brazilian or Portuguese people who lived in Brazil and had ties to fascism. Additionally, at first, the newspaper held high expectations about the Revolution and Vargas' leadership.

Following the 1932 uprising in São Paulo, matters began to change. Vargas' weaknesses began to emerge. Their disappointment with his conciliatory attitude pushed them away from the Brazilian leader once and for all. Hopes tentatively shifted to the *tenentes* of *Clube 3 de Outubro* and, later, to the Integralists, Catholics, and, finally, the Patrianovists. Furthermore, the warm welcome to those exiled by Vargas in Lisbon demonstrated their misreading of the Brazilian situation. In the absence of any presumed heroism on the part of Vargas, they searched out those who opposed him even when having no actual connections with the fascist movement.

They finally understood that Vargas was not a dictator similar to Gomes da Costa and that the Paulistas were not oppositionists, as was the case in the *revirinho*, primarily as they had no desire to return to the past, as was the case in the Oporto and Lisbon uprisings of 1927. According to the Portuguese fascists, Vargas lost his way because he allowed the project for a national dictatorship to become personalistic, i. e., a dictatorship of politicians. Unlike other European dictatorships, Vargas:

... is not a dictator driven by a sincere desire to save from the power of the partisan hordes the noble Brazilian nation, which has such glorious traditions and is so close to our hearts due to our strong racial affinities. He lacks an ideal, a new doctrine which, as in the European dictatorships, replaces the old liberalist state with the new, nationalist state. He has ousted the parties and created a dictatorship of politicians.³²

Expectations of Vargas dwindled as the Brazilian leader turned away from fascism and became more closely interlinked with the authoritarian and nationalist groups surrounding him.

In the absence of any Brazilian leader capable of living up to the expectations of Portuguese National Syndicalism, they turned to other sectors of Brazilian politics they were able to identify with. However, not even *Clube 3 de Outubro*, with its ongoing opposition to the country's re-constitutionalization then taking place and its affiliation with authoritarian ideals, was considered strong enough to carry out a redemptive project for the country that would

32 Issue of October 1st, 1932.

free it from the liberal influences of the United States. Additionally, not even the Integralists, the real Brazilian fascists, were seen as allies because they were republicans. That left only even more minoritarian groups, such as the conservative Catholics – not necessarily fascists – and particularly the Patrianovists. Finally, they settled for those exiled in 1932, who were victims of circumstances about which they actually understood very little.

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